

Creating Creatures For NIGHTBREED

BOB KEEN, and his partner Geoff Portass, run their own very special company, Image Animation, and with their talented team of designers, model makers, artists, technicians and engineers they have created the stunning effects for Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* and its sequel *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, plus *The Unholy*; *Waxwork* and Ken Russell's *The Lair Of The White Worm* as well as various TV commercials and music videos.

"Clive came to us and said, 'I've got this great monster movie, would you like to do it'," said Geoff Portass. Barker's intention was to make the biggest monster movie ever! He wanted to do the *Star Wars* of monster movies.

The Liverpool born writer-director explained, "The whole idea of *Nightbreed* began with a novel I wrote called 'Cabal'. As I was finishing it I realised it would lend itself very nicely to movie adaptation. *Nightbreed* doesn't look anything like the way I imagined it when I was writing 'Cabal'. It has turned out to be much larger in scale than I originally anticipated.

"What is very different about *Nightbreed* is, where the emphasis in *Hellraiser* was very much in terms of its shocks and horrors, *Nightbreed* is in many ways a much more benign piece of work; its vision of the world is, I think, sweeter. It still has a great deal of darkness and an awful lot of perversity in it, but I do

think the vision is very different from the vision in *Hellraiser*.

"It was inevitable that I was going back to Image Animation with this project," said Clive, "particularly as it

FILM MONTHLY reports on the making of Clive Barker's movie full of bizarre creatures who live in a special world of their own. Says Barker, "I'm hoping that this movie will touch the parts that Clive Barker fiction hasn't hitherto touched"

was so big – literally the creation of a small colony of creatures, each of which was different from the next. So a great fertility, a great

fecundity was needed when it came to the creation of this colony.

"Of course the *Nightbreed* were going to have transforming creatures and blood suckers and the sort of night creatures that you'd expect. But we were also going to have a whole other level of creation right up to Baphomet, which is the god of the *Nightbreed*, and it was going to require the rule book to be thrown out of the window.

"In 'Cabal' the *Breed* are rendered very impressionistically. Probably when you actually come down to the descriptions of what the *Breed* are, it wouldn't fill more than a single page of the book. Obviously if we were going to create these creatures for the screen they had to be completely realised. I want audiences to have the impression that there is this great gathering of creatures and they are never quite sure they've seen them all. I think Image Animation has once again created some immensely memorable images – creatures which are monstrous and beautiful in the same moment, which has always been my favourite condition for any creature."

In singling out just one of the film's many exciting visual images, Barker chooses the confrontation with the great god Baphomet as his favourite, "because it points to the religious underpinning of the movie. Baphomet



isn't even described in the book – he is in flames and the technical problems of making that work on film made me think about the character until I dreamt it. I literally dreamt it, and there he was. I think in the film he is actually better than I described him in the book."

It took Geoff Portass around seven hours to transform actor Bernard Henry into the Baphomet, the god of Midian. "That was the longest it took for any make-up. It all depends on how many pieces have to go on, the complexity of the pieces, and the paint jobs that have to be done. The average make-up takes about five to six hours – that was for normal run-of-the-mill monsters. The background creatures had the over-the-head masks or more simple make-ups, so they took two to three hours each."

One of *Nightbreed's* most-used make-ups was created for star Craig Sheffer, for the scenes where he transforms himself into a Nightbreed. He plays the hero, Boone, who saves the creatures from extermination. "Boone's make-up was designed to be more human in origin," said Portass. "It was designed to resemble the creature who bites him, Peloquin, in that he had patterns on his face. We made him look slightly fiercer just through very subtle changes in his facial shape, but it still looked like Craig under the make-up. It was complex because it was used more than thirty

times, and it was difficult producing that number of pieces: there were also three different stages to it – each getting more progressively monstrous."

Bob Keen describes *Nightbreed* as "probably one of the weirdest films we've worked on. It's a great role reversal in that the monsters are the good guys. Clive has ensured that we care for these creatures – they are all so innocent. For an effects person that meant a completely different set of rules as far as the creatures were concerned: our colour schemes were different, our concepts were different, and anything that was too negative we played down because we wanted people to feel for the Breed."

The task of creating the world of Midian fell to production designer Steve Hardie and his experienced art department team. Steve said that it took six weeks to construct Midian on Pinewood Studio's largest sound stages. But, two days before shooting was scheduled to begin the vast and impressive set was temporarily damaged by water. A small, self-contained fire set off the stage's sprinkler system which resulted in a three day delay before filming could start.

Another of the film's impressive sets is the grave-

yard section of Midian which also filled an entire sound stage at Pinewood. "It took about five weeks to build," said Steve. In fact twenty sets were constructed on five stages of the studio.

For the other lead roles of Boone and Lori, Barker chose Anne Bobby, who he found in a casting session in New York, for the part of Lori. "She just struck me as being extraordinary and vivacious."

American actor Craig Sheffer was cast as Boone in Los Angeles after Barker had seen dozens of potential Boones. "What I wanted," said Clive, "was someone who could bring a commitment to the project, who could view horror and fantasy fiction as genres worthy of their serious consideration, which is obviously what I do."

Barker added, "I think this movie will be a kind of ride – not a ghost train ride because that's too grim; not a fairy

tale ride because that's too grim as well – but a sort of ride through the space between my ears, a trip through Clive Barker's skull. There's some very dark stuff

in there, some sexy stuff and some funny stuff as well. I hope it will be the kind of dream you won't want to wake up from, the kind of dream that when you've opened your eyes you think, 'I wouldn't mind going back there'. *Nightbreed* doesn't have the *Grand Guignol* aspects of *Hellraiser*; this is richer, more fantastical



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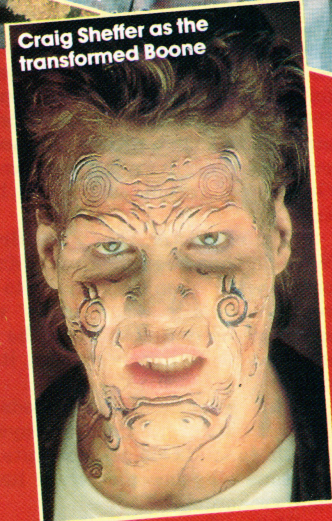
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In casting his movie Clive Barker, explained that he chose film director David Cronenberg for the key role of Dr Philip Decker because he struck him as being per-

fect for the part of a psycho-pathic analyst. "He's so witty, he's so erudite, he's so urbane, and yet the movies he makes are visceral and dark and gut-wrenching," said Barker.

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